

that come to mind immediately for the Middle East are the President's father, George H.W. Bush or Secretary James A. Baker III or former Secretary George Shultz. Each would bring a unique ability to sharply focus, using the administration's road map for peace, on bringing peace to the Middle East.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 449 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 449

Resolved, That it shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of Thursday, November 20, 2003, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules. The Speaker or his designee shall consult with the Minority Leader or her designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). The gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

This rule provides that suspensions will be in order at any time on the legislative day of Thursday, November 20, 2003. It also provides that the Speaker, or his designee, will consult with the minority leader, or her designee, on any suspension considered under the rule.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership of this House has set out an aggressive legislative plan for this week on behalf of the American people. The goal of this plan is to pass a number of bills over the next few days that will dramatically improve the quality of life for all Americans. This week we have already succeeded in passing an energy conference report that will bring our Nation's outdated energy policy into the 21st century through comprehensive legislation that promotes conservation, reduces America's growing dependence on foreign oil, and creates new jobs.

For the balance of the week we are slated to consider legislation among the following things: number one, to authorize spending levels for intelligence activities needed to win the war on terrorism; number two, to reform Medicare to make sure that more of our seniors have prescription drug coverage that they need while also giving them more and better choices for their health care coverage, also to allow all Americans to begin planning for their health needs through savings accounts that can be purchased, can

grow, and can be used on a tax-free basis; and, number three, to provide for a uniform national credit recording system that ensures that consumers are protected from identity theft while giving them access to the fast and reliable credit that makes our economy the envy of the rest of the world.

I understand that Members on both sides of the aisle may have different views about how to address these issues, and we will have the opportunity to hear a great deal of debate from both sides over the next few days on each of these issues and many others. However, a great deal of legislation that the Republican House leadership has also scheduled for consideration on behalf of all Americans has broad support from both the majority and the minority. And in an attempt to make sure that this important work is finished by the end of this legislative week as well, we are here to pass a rule to provide for consideration of these bills.

This balanced rule provides the minority with an ability to consult with the Speaker on any suspension that is offered, ensuring that their input and views are duly considered before any legislation is considered under this rule brought to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this noncontroversial, balanced rule.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me 30 minutes.

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, this unusual move to allow for consideration of motions to suspend the rules provides this body with a great opportunity. Many pieces of legislation important to our constituents are awaiting consideration. With this rule we have a wonderful chance to address some of these significant issues. We should consider legislation to extend Federal unemployment benefits for an additional 6 months; I believe that would pass unanimously. Currently unemployment benefits are set to expire on December 31. We should not allow the millions of Americans still desperately looking for work to begin the next year in the lurch.

I am particularly concerned about the loss of 44,000 manufacturing jobs in Upstate New York since 2002. In Rochester alone, manufacturing employment is down 20 percent. In these tough economic times, it is our duty to help; and since we are rushing to adjournment this week, this is our last opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to use this golden opportunity to pass the genetic nondiscrimination legislation. Since 1995 I have led the fight to pass this nonpartisan, noncontroversial, and

widely supported legislation. The bill currently has 236 cosponsors from both sides of the aisle, the support of over 200 outside organizations, and the support of the President of the United States. Last month the other body unanimously passed the legislation which prohibits genetic discrimination. This is critical to the health of the country, something we have talked about all week. If we do not pass this legislation to prohibit genetic discrimination, we are in danger of bringing much of the research that we are so proud of in the United States to a halt.

Discrimination is already taking place. We have lots of evidence of it both in employment and insurance. If we want to continue to be on the forefront of science and to be able to make our residents and citizens the healthiest in the world, this bill should be passed. I want to urge the Speaker of the House today to put this bill on the suspension calendar, let us pass it, let the President sign it, and let us all move toward better health.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN).

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

I had not planned to come to the floor this morning, but I was sitting in my office and I heard my colleague from Florida mention Claude Pepper's name in relationship to this Medicare bill. Claude Pepper would be turning over in his grave by this bill. It was an insult to all of the fine work that Claude Pepper did in this House, and he would be on this floor speaking against this horrible bill.

This Republican Medicare bill is a slap in the face for every senior struggling to pay for needed medicine. The leadership of this House is not pushing this bill because they care about seniors. In fact, they would end the program altogether. In 1995 the majority leader called Medicare "a program I would have no part of." Another leader said "a program that I hope will wither on the vine." Now they want us to believe the spin that they really care about Medicare.

A zebra cannot change its stripes, Mr. Speaker, and the American people are not buying this sham. America's seniors are happy with the Medicare program, and we should provide for a prescription drug benefit the same way we provide for doctor visits through Medicare and not through a private program that even the insurance industry says will not work. This is a life-and-death issue for many of our seniors, and this hollow bill does nothing for that.

And I want to close quoting the only black Supreme Court Justice we ever had, Thurgood Marshall. He said: "A snake is a snake. It does not matter whether it is black or white; if it bites you, it is the same." And I can say that for the Republicans on this bill, and I can also say that for AARP, who has left the people.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It is early in the morning in Washington, and we are back at it again talking about this wonderful opportunity that we have to come down to the floor of the House of Representatives and speak our minds. And it is no surprise to the American public that the Democrat Party and its Members oppose reform in Medicare. It is no surprise to the American public that we recognize that the Democrat Party is not only opposed to reform but also to competition, which is what is in this bill; and it is no surprise to the American public that what will happen in the next day or two as the debate gets closer is that the American public will hear and find out about how the market reforms and things and ideas that will come from this bill will make life better for millions of Americans.

What is surprising is to hear the Democrat Party lambast AARP. The AARP is that organization for senior citizens all across this country who I think has made a very wise and careful decision to look at this prescription drug plan, and they have very clearly said that the Republican Party is right on the policy and they are right on what will give long-term success to this great Nation.

But we have heard very clearly this morning what the Democrat Party intends to do. They intend to keep Medicare exactly the way it is, in trouble financially and will very soon go bankrupt.

Reform is necessary if we are going to save this system, but reform is also necessary for the millions of Americans who today are without the ability to purchase health care solely because of money. What we are going to do is make it easier for Americans, not just people who go to work but some of them who are just now entering the marketplace, to be able to save money for health care on a pretax and tax-free basis, an opportunity for them to save this money and, when they are younger, to put that money away and to grow it tax free to be able to use it for health care, to make sure that they will be able to make wiser decisions in their future, that they will be able to make the wise decisions for their family at a time when they need that money most of all.

So what Republicans really stand for once again is reform and making sure that the most critical systems that are in place in our country are not only strengthened, but we make sure that they will survive the onslaught as times change and we have so many people retiring, but we need to make sure that our children and grandchildren have that same opportunity that we have had to have a system, an underpinning in this country that takes care of people.

So I am very pleased today, as we begin our work and debate in Washington. It is no surprise that here we are on this beautiful day in Wash-

ington, D.C., we begin with the debate on the floor to talk about the activities for the week, and I am so proud that not only what the Republican majority stands for but that the reform and the things we are going to bring to the American public will include opportunities for them to save for their own health care, because the most important part is, just like my family, I have a chance then to make a decision, to be a decision-maker in the health care needs of my family.

□ 1030

I have a beautiful wife of 19 years. I have a son who is 14 years old and a Down's Syndrome son who is 9. If there is one thing that I am passionate about, it is that I want a system in this country where families have an opportunity to make their decisions about health care, and we can do that when we have money in our own pockets. And that is what this reform is about, to make sure not just my family, but millions of other families across this great Nation have that same opportunity. That is what this health care savings account is going to be about. That is what Medicare reform is all about. I am proud of what we are doing.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, had the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), my good friend, yielded to me, I simply wanted to ask him if he is aware that the administration has just given AARP a \$20 million grant and ask if he wondered if that had anything to do with their decision.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to thank the gentleman from New York for engaging us this morning on this very important rule which will allow us to continue our work. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this rule as I am sure they do.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2417, INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 451 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 451

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2417) to authorize appropriations for

fiscal year 2004 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only on this matter.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules has granted the customary rule for consideration of conference reports to H.R. 2417, the Intelligence Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2004. This is standard procedure. The rule is fair and without controversy as far as I know, and it does allow ample time for consideration of conference matters that have come up.

Mr. Speaker, as in past years, we thought it best to allow Members ample opportunity to review the bill and debate the issues they feel are important to our Nation's security. This was certainly exhibited earlier this summer when we passed, with overwhelming bipartisan support, the Intelligence Authorization Act in the House. Our classified annex and staff have been made available to any Member of Congress interested in reviewing the underlying bill and the reports thereto.

Today we are at the culmination of this process. The conference report on H.R. 2417 is critical, it is must-do legislation.

The bill authorizes appropriations for fiscal year 2004 intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement Account and Disability system.

In the past 2 years, our country has made very strong steps to improve our Nation's intelligence-gathering capabilities, as well as the analysis of the results of those intelligence-gathering capabilities. With that said, the attacks this morning in Istanbul are yet again a painful reminder that every day, we must not let down our guard. Rather, it emphasizes work that remains to be accomplished. We need to strengthen our intelligence capabilities and align them to deal with the threats that we face today.

This legislation convincingly moves us in the right direction by enhancing the depth and the capacity of all facets of our intelligence community. The bill provides for improved intelligence analysis and coordination. It continues the effort to increase our human intelligence resources, an area vital to the